

POPE FRANCIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

(Editor's Note: Pope Francis has not released his 2018 Christmas message as yet but the following excerpts for 2017 still seem relevant.)

Pope Francis said that true peace is not a “balance of opposing forces,” nor a “lovely facade which conceals conflicts and divisions.” Rather, he said, peace calls for “daily commitment, starting from God’s gift, from the grace which he has given us in Jesus Christ.”

Looking at the Child in the manger, he said “our thoughts turn to those children who are the most vulnerable, victims of wars; but we think, too, of the elderly, of battered women, of the sick. ... Wars shatter and hurt so many lives!”

“Let us never lose the courage of prayer!”



Christmas Gathering Activities

1. Bring potluck dishes that serve 6 to 8 people. Dish assignments by last name are: **A to L:** Side dishes; **M to O:** Desserts; **P to Z:** Main Dishes
2. Optional gift exchange; limit cost to \$10/gift.
3. Be prepared to share which figurine in the manger scene is the most spiritually significant to you. You may also bring your own figurine from your home crèche (Nativity).
4. New Fraternity rosters will be issued by electronic or paper copy. Call or email **Gerry Rohrkemper, OFS** and notify her on your roster option.

FRATERNITY GATHERING RECAP



Bill with deceased daughter (Melissa) and granddaughter (Kristelle); Adrian with deceased wife (Sophia).

The November 18th Fraternity Gathering was called to order with **Adrian Montoya** attending as a new Fraternity guest. Adrian was invited by **Bill Parras** (Newsletter Editor), Their

friendship bonded during the recent **Living Through Loss Program**. **Sophia Montoya** (Adrian’s wife) passed on to Our Lord’s loving arms in April, 2018 after a prolonged disease.

A solemn memorial ceremony was celebrated honoring the deceased loved ones of all attending Fraternity members. Each member wrote and read the names of their loved ones. The names of all deceased Fraternity members were posted and honored on a TAU placard. Pictures of Fraternity loved ones were also displayed. The Liturgy of Hours for the Dead was reverently prayed.

In ongoing formation, Brother **Abraham Placencio, OFS** (Fraternity Minister) led the review and discussion on Chapter 3, entitled **“Brothers and Sisters of Penance”** from Deacon Tom Bello’s book: **“For All The Saints: St. Francis’ Five Point Plan for Salvation”**. Discussion focused on: (1) what does it mean to be “brothers and sisters of penance,” and (2) what are the concrete “blessings of penance”.

Christmas bag gifts were prepared for delivery to our beloved Fraternity Homebound members.

Have a Blessed Christmas!

ST. FRANCIS' DEVOTION TO BABY JESUS

(Editor's Note: This article was originally published November 2014. © The Catholic Company. All rights reserved.)

St. Francis had a special devotion to the Child Jesus, and he is credited with creating the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve of the year 1223.

It is believed that St. Francis was first inspired by this idea after visiting the historical place of Christ's birth on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land—the humble stable in a Bethlehem cave. It is likely this event which deepened his devotion to the Child Jesus, who was born into the world in such poverty, humility, and simplicity. In fact, Francis founded his new religious Order to imitate these very virtues.

THE FIRST NATIVITY SCENE

St. Francis told a friend why he desired to create the first nativity scene in his town:

"I want to do something that will recall the memory of that Child who was born in Bethlehem, to see with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger, and how the ox and ass stood by."

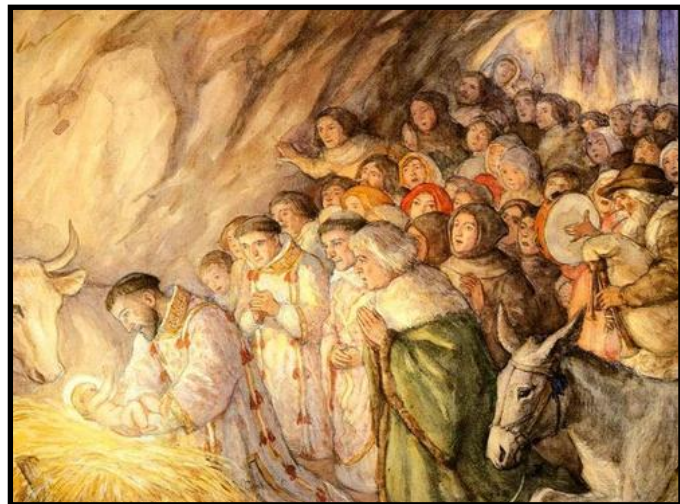
He set up an empty manger (the feeding trough of farm animals which served as Jesus' crib) inside a cave, and even included a live ox and donkey beside the manger just as it was believed to have happened on that first Christmas night. Through these visual aids he wanted everyone to impress more deeply into their understanding how Christ came into the world in such poverty and simplicity. This was a typical perspective of St. Francis' unique charisma of simple, poverty-centered spirituality.

It is also said that St. Francis—who was radically devoted to the virtue of evangelical poverty—was inspired to recreate the original nativity scene to overcome the rampant greed and materialism prevalent at that time in Italy.

ST. BONAVENTURE TELLS THE STORY

St. Bonaventure (1221–1274), a follower and contemporary of St. Francis, has given us a complete account of the night of the first live nativity scene:

"It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, (St. Francis) determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the



sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed.

The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise."

What a beautiful scene! Each time we meet at our churches for a nativity pageant or live nativity scene, or around a nativity decoration for a time of prayer, we are participating in a centuries-old Catholic tradition.

St. Bonaventure goes on to talk about St. Francis of Assisi's personal devotion to the Baby Jesus that sparked this event:

"The man of God (St. Francis) stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem."

ST. FRANCIS' VISION OF THE CHILD JESUS

The first nativity scene is also associated with an apparition of the Baby Jesus to those gathered with St. Francis on that day. This must have been Jesus' way of giving his praise and blessing to the nativity scene, which was a novelty in its time and had never been done before.

Again, St. Bonaventure continues the story,

"A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvelously beautiful, sleeping in the manger,

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Whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep.

This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it, but by reason of the miracles which afterwards confirmed its truth.

For example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying his servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles.”

THE SPREAD OF THE DEVOTION

St. Francis' recreation of that first Christmas night was so popular that soon every church in Italy had its own nativity scene. The devotion also spread to private homes, and in modern times even to

secular institutions, so much so that it's now impossible to imagine Christmas without a nativity scene to behold.

Hopefully this story of the first nativity scene will inspire you to see your nativity set as much more than just as a pretty Christmas decoration. It

is a historic Catholic tradition and a tool for meditation on the humility, simplicity, and poverty of Christ that he took on, from the moment of his Incarnation, out of his boundless love for his lost sheep.



(Editor's Note: For a more detailed rendition of St Francis ' Devotion to the Baby Jesus consider the book: "The Story of St. Francis of Assisi and the First Nativity Scene — as told by St. Bonaventure" at Catholic Company.com)

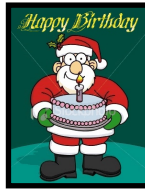
PRAYER FOR THE CITY

**Almighty and Ever-living God,
You are the giver of every good gift.
Grateful for your blessings,
we come before You seeking your favor
for the **city of Albuquerque.**
Look mercifully upon us as we face so
much violence and so many social ills.
We ask that You pour out
the Holy Spirit to renew
us in your grace.
Grant your protection upon our
children —
both those in the womb and those out
in the world, upon our elderly, our care
givers, our first responders and upon
all of our citizens.
Convert the hard-hearted,
the criminals and
all those who oppose
your gracious will.
Help us find ways to build up
true justice and peace
in our community.
Move us to reach out to the poor,
the homeless, the sick, the abandoned,
the victims of violence
and the stranger.
Transform our city into an oasis of
fellowship and love
in order that we may become brothers
and sisters in a city of God.
We ask this though
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

— Msgr. Bennett J. Voorhies

December/January Calendars			
Dec 1	Council Meet	ABP*	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Dec 2	Candidacy Class	Rena's Home	1-3pm
Dec 8	New Council Orientation	ABP*	9:00 - 11:30am
Dec 11	Inquiry Class	ABP*	3:30-5:30pm
Dec 16	Candidacy Class	No Class/Christmas	
Dec 16	Inquiry Class	No Class/Christmas	
Dec 16	FRATERNITY GATHERING (ABP*) 2:15-5:00pm (St Martin's HopeWorks: Socks or personal size toiletries donations)		
Jan 5	Council Meet	ABP*	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Jan 6	Candidacy Class	Rena's Home	1-3pm
Jan 8	Inquiry Class	ABP*	3:30-5:30pm
Jan 20	Candidacy Class	ABP*	12:15-2:15pm
Jan TBD	Inquiry Class	Rena's Home	TBD
Jan 20	FRATERNITY GATHERING (ABP*) 2:00-5:00pm (CFR Pantry: Jelly, Canned green beans, corn & soups, pasta & pasta sauce, & sugar)		
Jan 26	Council Meet	ABP*	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
ABP: "A Becoming Place"; TBD: "To Be Determined"			
Hospitality Assignments			
DATE	GROUP	VOLUNTEERS	
Dec 16	Fraternity Christmas potluck, Please volunteer to setup and cleanup!!!		
Jan 20	2	Abraham, Ed & Carol Ann, Margaret, Rex, Felis	

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS:



Mary Lou Narvaez	Dec 13
Gina Lubeck	Dec 13
Bernadette McMillan	Dec 20

WE PRAY FOR:

Ernestine Sedillo, Chaline Parras (Bill's niece), Nanette and Stephanie (Tommie's daughters), Jeannette Feldman, Connie Jo Martinez, Elizabeth Chavez, Deacon Charlie Johnson, Barbara Heilman, Art and Erma Alcaria, Eva Bevington, John and Nancy Fishel, Linda and her family, Kevin, Derek Kolb, Cheryl Thomas (Br. Gordon's sister), Clare Domenici and Karen Fellner's sister.



For the repose of the souls of Winifred Klimka, Cidro Gallegos (Rena's brother), Dorothy Swanson, Minnie Vasquez (Espiritu Santo), Wilfred Otero, Arturo Olivas, Sen. Pete Domenici (Clare's father), and Harry Martinez (Connie Jo's

OFS SAINTS FOR DECEMBER

DEC	OFS SAINT NAME
7	St. Mary Joseph Rossello, Virgin
10	Blessed Hugolinus Magalotti, Confessor
11	Blessed Peter of Sienna, Confessor
15	Blessed Mary Frances Schervier, Virgin
16	Venerable Mary Crucifixa, Virgin
17	Blessed Bartolo of San Gimignano, Confessor
21	Blessed Bernard of Baden, Confessor
26	Blessed Jeremy Lamberthenghi, Confessor

(Source: OFS Australia)

ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY
REQUEST FOR ACTIVE OR EXCUSED STATUS FORM FOR YEAR 2019

I, _____

Name	E-mail
Address, City, State, Zip	Phone
Emergency Contact—Name--Relationship	Phone
Address of contact	

Request of St. Anthony Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order, Albuquerque, NM the following status (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/> Active	I wish to continue active status with the fraternal responsibilities and contribute according to my means.
<input type="checkbox"/> Excused	<p>I am unable to attend monthly fraternity gatherings with my sisters and brothers in the community due to the following reason(s):</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <p>I understand that this request must be renewed annually and that it does not release me from the other fraternal responsibilities of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An active prayer life including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Praying the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) or other forms of prayer and attending daily Mass whenever possible. b. Praying for living or deceased Fraternity members and their families. 2. Contributing to the Common Fund according to my means. 3. Participating in outreach activities to serve the poor or marginalized, whenever possible.

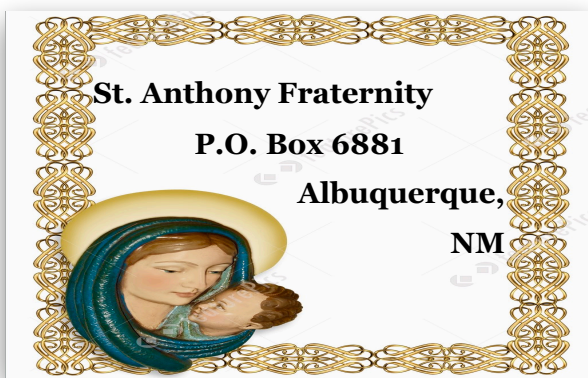
Signature of Member whether Active or Excused _____
Date

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM BY December 31, 2018 TO:
 Gerry Rohrkemper, OFS
 10751 Humphries Ln. SW
 Albuquerque, NM 87121-3650
 505-873-2657

Please check box if:

- Your address or phone number has changed.
- You need a ride to the monthly Gatherings.
- You are willing to drive one of your brothers or sisters to the monthly Gathering.

Minister	Abraham Placencio, OFS	505-730-1838	abrahamisfranciscan@gmail.com
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Newsletter Editor	Bill Parras	505-400-8305	billparras@mac.com
Website	http://franciscanalbuquerque.sfousa.org		



“Jesus is NOT just the reason for the season (Christmas).

Jesus is the reason PERIOD!” (Source: Duns Scotus)

<p style="text-align: center;">We are the <i>Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis</i> (The Secular Franciscan Order) in the United States of America. We live our vocation in our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas Region. Our Franciscan Community is the St. Anthony Fraternity in Albuquerque, NM.</p>	<p>OUR MISSION STATEMENT: We, the fraternity of St. Anthony, inspired by the vision of St. Francis, commit ourselves to the Gospel as our Way of Life: “Going from Gospel to Life and from Life to Gospel.” We believe that we are called to fraternity to share a life of joy and peace as well as to draw our inspiration from the cross of Jesus as Francis did. We believe that we are called to be renewed continually through the celebration of the Eucharist and to go forth to rebuild the Church through our witness.</p>
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